

## Children's Services Committee

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Location: **Microsoft Teams meeting**  
**Join on your computer or mobile app**

Date: Tuesday, 1/31/2023  
Time: 1:00 P.M. CST/2:00 P.M. EDT

**Staff Present:** Cory Bradfield, Kylie Graves, Jeni Davis, Craig Hargrow, Russette Marcum Embry, Richard Kennedy, Bill Latimer, Melissa McGee, Steve Petty, Rob Burke, Therese Sipes, Rachel Vowell, Marquita Moore, Kate Gonzales

**Staff Absent:** None

**Commission Members:** Amy Jones, Committee Chair, Randy Butler, Ella Britt, Steven Neely, Honorable Judge Rob Philyaw, Commission Chair

**Commission Members Absent** Glenda Terry, Mackenzie Johnston, Rob Mortensen, Charmaine Kromer, Kelly Drummond,

**Guests:** None

1) **Call to Order – Amy Jones, Chair**

After ascertaining there was a quorum, Jones called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. Jones asked for any new persons to introduce themselves, Marquita Moore, TCCY new staff, introduced herself to the group.

2) **Approval of October Children's Services Minutes (ACTION)**

Jones asked for a motion to approve the Children's Services minutes from the October 2022 Committee Meeting.

***Britt moved to approve the minutes from October 2022.***

***Neely seconded. Unanimously Approved.***

3) **Staff Updates**

**Home Visiting Leadership Alliance (HVLA)**

Home Visiting Leadership Alliance (HVLA) hosted a hybrid meeting on 12/8/23. The meeting was held at the Lentz Public Health Center with 11 attending in person and 35 attending virtually, for a total of 46 attendees. Updates and presentations were provided in the first half of the meeting by the Department of Health, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, Tennessee Early Connect Project, Emergency Preparedness Toolkit, and Healthy Families TN. Attendees prioritized the goals outlined in the previous meeting, and it was determined that the focus for 2023 will be to network/collaborate, educate/advocate, ensure the sustainability of evidence-based home visiting programs across the state, and support workforce retention. Action steps were developed to work toward meeting each of the outlined goals. The next meeting will on 2/9/23, which will be held in a hybrid model at Lentz Public Health Center.

Rob Burke, the Director of HVLA, was named TCCY's representative and liaison of the Resilient TN Leadership Academy. This was initiated with an Opening Retreat on October 17-19 and continues with monthly sessions. Rob and the Program Director at DOH continue to meet bi-monthly to plan and execute the work of the HVLA. Rob is an active member of a national community of practice for home visiting programs facilitated by Start Early and was also chosen to participate in the Parent Learning Series also facilitated by Start Early. Rob is also serving as the co-chair of the TN IECMH Financing and Policy Team, Action Team 4. Burke also provided a review of TCCY programs for Smoky Mountain Inter Community Agency Meeting (SMICAM).

## **Youth Transitions Advisory Council**

The Youth Transitions Advisory Council met October 6<sup>th</sup> at the Lentz Public Health Center and virtually via Microsoft Teams. Approximately 25-30 people attended in-person and virtually.

The meeting began with a presentation from the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services featuring some programs available for transition-age youth. Further, Office of Independent Living at the Department of Children's Services (DCS) provided information about the Federal Assistance provided youth in Extension of Foster Care Services through the work of DCS and Youth Villages LifeSet program.

A highlight of the meeting was the presentation from two young adults on Project Instar, an independent program that was brought to the attention of the Council by our partners at the Chambliss Center. The program connects transition age foster youth with other young adults who recently experienced the same transition. Plans are underway for a panel of these young adults in a public forum. The meeting concluded

with the regular updates from the DCS Resource Centers.

The next meeting of YTAC will be held March 23<sup>rd</sup>, featuring the regular presenters.

The 2022 Annual Report was delivered to the legislative mailboxes of all members of the Tennessee General Assembly and the Governor's office, per statute, on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022. The report was posted by the Communications Coordinator and a link was sent to the above in addition to the Commissioners of the child-serving departments.

## **Resilient Tennessee Collaborative**

TCCY continues partnering with state agencies and statewide organizations serving Tennessee's children and youth to educate, promote and support healthy child development environments and systems.

TCCY coordinates meetings of the RTC Coordinating Team as direction support for Resilient Tennessee Collaborative. The Coordinating Team is undergoing some changes in membership due to recent retirements. The Team discussed filling those positions left open through retirements, as well as invitations to additional community partners statewide. The Team has also decided to return to monthly meetings.

### *Training for Trainers*

TCCY completed the final three rounds of Training for Trainers during the Fall of 2022 and has retired in leadership of this initiative. TCCY will lead a focus group discussion with statewide partners in determination of the next steps for the training for trainers.

### *Community*

McGee traveled to Northeast Tennessee to present on the work of the RTC to the Strong ACC's Resilient Region Workgroup and met with local leaders to continue identification of similar efforts and partnership work. McGee has also been asked to join the Bright Start TN Steering Committee and she and Dana Cobb are part of the TN Brighter Futures grant to provide education on ACEs and Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs).

McGee led the Focus Group discussion facilitating ideas on the future of the Building Strong Brains Training for Trainers.

- a. 2023 Meeting Dates for the RTC:
  - a. February 22<sup>nd</sup>
  - b. SUMMIT – May 10<sup>th</sup>
  - c. August 23<sup>rd</sup>
  - d. November 8<sup>th</sup>

The RTC is planning a full day summit on May 10<sup>th</sup> and is working to secure partnership with TN Department of Health, TN Department of Children’s Services and other statewide partners in this endeavor. The Summit will provide national, regional and local speakers as well as an opportunity for networking among attendees.

McGee and Kylie Graves presented at the Rural Health Association of Tennessee’s Fall Conference in November on “Building a More Resilient Tennessee”.

## **Second Look Commission**

The Second Look Commission (SLC) met on October 11<sup>th</sup> for the final case reviews of the year and subsequently met on November 8<sup>th</sup> and December 13<sup>th</sup> to finalize their findings, recommendations, and observations. The 2022 annual report and report highlights document was delivered to the Governor and General Assembly on December 29<sup>th</sup>. The preliminary findings, recommendations, and observations were sent to 11 stakeholder groups for their input.

Recommendations in the annual report included:

- Each county, or at least each judicial district, should have an ADA dedicated to handling cases involving crimes against children. Additionally, the General Assembly should form a committee to research what additional resources DAs may need to appropriately address crimes against children.
- Members recommend individuals investigating child abuse or participating in CPIT receive additional ongoing training. SLC also noted opportunities for investigation training, court training and judiciary training.
- Members recommend updating the CPIT statute to require a medical examiner or appropriately credentialed medical provider participate in CPIT reviews of child death cases.
- Due to the variety of professionals that play a critical role in child abuse cases, members noted the need for expanded and ongoing training to ensure all

parties consistently implement best practices.

The Second Look Commission is continuing their partnership with the Boyd Center for Economic Research at University of Tennessee to create a report estimating the economic cost of child maltreatment in Tennessee. We have run into delays getting data from DCS so we are discussing adjusting our project timeline, but still hope to have the report completed by March.

## **Council on Children’s Mental Health (CCMH)**

The fourth meeting of the Council on Children’s Mental Health was held both in person at the Ellington Agricultural Center and virtually via Microsoft Teams on October 20<sup>th</sup> from 10 am – 2 pm. Approximately 40-50 were in attendance in-person and virtually.

The meeting was primarily focused on Suicide Prevention and Substance Abuse Services. After extended introductory remarks including a review of programs from Matt Yancey, Deputy Commissioner at the TN Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS), the meeting featured presentations from the Substance Abuse Services division of TDMHSAS, the the Tennessee Department of Health, and the Suicide Prevention Network. Finally, the council heard an update from Graham Thomas with Tennessee Achieves.

The next meeting of CCMH will be held on February 23<sup>rd</sup> and will feature a policy update from the TCCY Policy Specialist and a presentation on Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health.

Along with the Executive Director and the Director of Statewide Partnerships, Cory Bradfield, the CCMH Director is conducting outreach to the relevant appointing authorities to ensure that membership of the council is consistent with the requirements in the statute that authorizes the council.

Bradfield participates in community and statewide meetings supporting children’s mental health in Tennessee, including the Infant and Early Childhood Financing Policy State Team, where he serves, along with the Director of the Young Child Wellness Council, as co-chair of the Policy Action Team. Bradfield continues to serve on the Child Care Board of Review.

## **Ombudsman Program**

Marcum-Embry reported 23 new referrals were received for the months of October, November, and December 2023. As of the end of December, there were 27 cases open in the Ombudsman Program data base. Please refer to Ombudsman Program graphs for demographic information.

Marcum-Embry attended one meeting of the USOA Children and Families Chapter, and three CFTMs. She also assisted in executing the last Training for Trainers event in December.

Marcum-Embry continues to support two interns from the UT College of Social Work, Kate Keese and Therese Sipes, who will be with TCCY through May 2023. Marcum-Embry is serving as both field instructor and task manager.

Marcum-Embry and Therese Sipes worked together to coordinate the TCCY annual sponsoring of youth in DCS custody during the holidays. Various gifts were provided to four youth currently in foster care.

Marcum-Embry continues to serve on the Wilson County Foster Care Review Board, the UT College of Social Work Field Advisory Committee, the Children and Families Chapter of the USOA, and as TCCY/Kennedy's representative on the Council on Developmental Disabilities.

## **Tennessee Young Child Wellness Council**

Tennessee Young Child Wellness Council (TNYCWC) took place on 12/14/22 at the Nashville Metro West Police Precinct with 24 attending in person and 63 attending virtually, for a total of 87 attendees. Updates and presentations were provided in the first half of the meeting by the Department of Health (DOH), Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, and Tennessee Early Connect Project. Attendees prioritized the statements given at the last meeting to define the purpose of TNYCWC as well as goals for 2023. These goals are: Achieving collective impact, Creating plans for improvement of systems, and Prevention of duplication of programs/services and identifying service gaps. Steps were identified to work towards meeting these goals. The next meeting will be held on 3/9/23, which will be held in a hybrid model at West Precinct Police Station.

The Steering Committee continues to meet virtually on the first Thursday of the month and met on 8/4/22. This meeting focused on introducing Rob Burke as the new Director of TNYCWC and HVLA, setting the agenda for the September meeting, and discussion around the development of Action Teams.

The Steering Committee met again on 9/1/22 and finalized details regarding the TNYCWC meeting on 9/21/22. There was also discussion about soliciting DCS representation on the Steering Committee, and it was decided that the best approach may be for the TCCY Executive Director to have a conversation with the newly appointed DCS Commissioner as to if the Commissioner has any recommendations. Executive Director Kennedy agreed to have this conversation with the DCS Commissioner.

The Steering Committee continues to meet virtually on the first Thursday of the month and the following was discussed:

**10/6/22:**

- a. Feedback was provided from the YCWC meeting on 9/21
- b. Strategic planning for the next YCWC meeting and beyond
- c. Effective use of Basecamp

**11/3/21:**

- d. Discussion of developing a Guiding Document for the Steering Committee
- e. Preparation for the YCWC meeting scheduled for 12/14

**12/1/21:**

- f. Development of the Guiding Document

**Special called meeting on 12/7/21:**

- g. Continued development of the Guiding Document

4) **Additional Items or Comments**

Kennedy expressed his appreciation for Commission members knowledge and support as he meets with legislators. Kennedy provided the Committee updates on Children's Advocacy Days.

5) **Motion to Adjourn**

Jones adjourned the meeting.